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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5642
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3360
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3224
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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 001143

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, INL/AEE BUHLER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: UNODC EVALUATED IMAMNAZAR
PROJECT WITH GOTX

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (U) On September 4, UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Chief of Mission Ercan Saka hosted an evaluation meeting for its Strengthening Turkmen-Afghan Border project, particularly construction of Imamnazar border crossing check point. The project, which is nearing completion, was funded by the U.S., UK and NATO. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of the Interior (MVD) Allamyrat Hajyev; Deputy Chairman of the State Border Service (SBS) LTC Ibragim Bekiyev; Deputy Chairman of the State Customs Service (SCS) Annamyrat Hojamgulyev; Deputy Chief of the State Counter-Narcotics Service (SCNS) Mered Berdyev; and the Head of International Relations Department of the SCNS Aman Muhammedkulyev. Although invited, the Deputy Minister of National Security, Ashyr Begliyev and Deputy Chairman of the State Commission on Drug Control Gurban Torayev were not present.

13. (U) UNODC prepared a detailed presentation on the project, and Saka began with a briefing on its background, how it was launched in 2006 and its expected completion in late December. He pointed out that the project was the only long-term initiative operating on Turkmenistan's border with Afghanistan, and that it enjoys the strong support of all Turkmen government law enforcement agencies, notwithstanding its operation in the border zone, an area normally of great sensitivity to the Turkmen government. The project's main goals were to improve the technical capacity of the Imamnazar border crossing point by constructing a new and equipped check point; to provide training assistance to station's law enforcement officers, and to improve its intelligence capacity. The total project budget was \$2.5 million,

funding provided principally by the U.S. Government, as well as other donors like the UK and NATO, with in-kind contributions from the Turkmen Government (such as exempting taxes and duties from goods imported for the construction and providing space without charge for project-related trainings and workshops). Saka reported that overall, 230 officers had been trained in the framework of the project between 2006 and 2009, and that a large amount of equipment was donated to the border station, including scales for trucks and two Russian-made SUVs. Turning to the overall effectiveness of the project, Saka pointed out that it will increase the government's narcotics interdiction capacity, government awareness of the issue, and the skills and knowledge of individual officers. In concluding, Saka explained that the meeting constituted the first phase of the project's evaluation, and that the second phase will take place in November by an independent external expert.

14. (U) During the Q&A session, Saka raised the ongoing problem of obtaining drug and contraband seizure statistics for Imamnazar, which is important for donors wishing to ascertain the effectiveness of the project. Another issue brought up was the frequent turnover of personnel at the border station. For instance, Saka said that since the project was launched three years ago, Imamnazar has had seven customs point chiefs. The SCNS representative responded that if UNODC officially requests the drug seizure statistics, they will be provided. He also commented that data on contraband other than drugs may

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be obtained from the State Customs Service in the same way, through a request to the MFA. Saka asked whether it would be possible to find out about cases where fraudulent passports and other documents had been confiscated at Imamnazar by migration officers. The Deputy Head of Migration appeared confused by such a direct question and said that he must seek the permission of his superiors before responding to UNODC.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: The Turkmen officials at the meeting appeared bored, and both the Interior Ministry and Customs Service participants left early. The coffee-break was shorter than was planned initially, as some officials were fasting for Ramadan. As usual in formal meetings with government officials, the interactions seemed stilted, with no questions from Turkmen side. Commenting on the project, only Col. Orazov spoke, saying that only "time will tell" regarding its effectiveness. END COMMENT.

CURRAN